

Western Coventry Fire District

1110 Victory Highway

Greene, RI 02827

(401) 397-7520

Moderator

Vacant

District Clerk

Jean Pomfret

Treasurer

Glenn Underwood

Tax Collector

Joan Smith

Board of Directors

Ch. Kent Novak

Members

Jon Mitchell

Richard Holt

Earl Mann

John Humble

April 15, 2010

WCFD Board of Directors Meeting

Present:

Kent Novak, Jonathan Mitchell, Richard Holt, and John Humble

Absent:

None

Also present:

Chief Joel Pomfret, District Clerk Jean Pomfret, Tax Collector Joan Smith, Treasurer Glen Underwood, Deputy Chief Hall, Firefighters Randy Crowe, Nathan Pomfret, Pete Lamarine, Bob Mann, Taxpayers: refer to hand written list.

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm by Chairperson Kent Novak.

Approval of March 18, 2010 BOD Meeting Minutes:

Minutes not ready.

Chief's Report:

Report copies handed out (WCFD Activity Report, March Salaries and Run Data report). Mr. Humble motioned to accept the Chief's report, Mssrs. Mitchell and Holt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Department Concerns:

Mr. David Dumas is speaking for the volunteers. They are concerned and Mr. Dumas agrees, with the ability of the district to comply with the mutual aid agreements; they are very concerned they will not be able to hold up their end of the bargain. They also wonder if the staffing level will allow the district to keep its EMT license. Mr. Dumas doesn't feel as if this is idle speculation; he won't get into the district's liability he will leave that for their legal counsel to decide.

Chairman Novak told the BOD that he received a letter from some of the volunteers expressing their lack of confidence in 2 of the BOD members and that they (the volunteers) are taking a leave of absence from active duty. Without objection there will be open forum on this item since there are Mutual Aid Departments present.

Ken Jackson, 2799 Harkney Hill Rd, thinks the district has a moral and legal responsibility to protect the taxpayers. He doesn't want the district to join a coalition and have the taxes rise over \$2.

Jim Sweet, Deputy Chief of Oneco, said he has been dealing with

them for 35 years and understands public safety is always hit first but always first on line and wants to know who will take the liability.

Taxpayer Art Lavoie, believes the departments will continue to give us mutual aid.

Mark Ellis, Chief of Potterville in Scituate, says they will continue to support us and will miss our support.

Member Kathleen Puckett feels that the Board doesn't support the members, that is why they are taking the action; they want to continue to move forward.

Member Randy Crowe said that he is one of the newest members and everything he has experienced so far has been positive; the members are not taking what they are doing lightly.

Member Desiree Fournier sees a lot of steps back lately. She says they made this decision because they care about the district. They don't do it for the money; they do it for the passion. They take certification classes to grow with the department.

Member David Fournier said they would like a thank you once in a while; they want to continue to see the department move forward.

Chief Pomfret said it was a very difficult thing for the members to

sign. The budget was a political thing, it was embarrassing and a shame that it came to that. He said the meeting last week (Annual Meeting) was a slap in everyone's face.

Deputy Chief Hall said he heard rumors about cutting compensation and duty crews. He said "We do it because we love what we do". He is concerned with compensation being cut because although it is not a lot of money many members do it instead of a part time job. He said the department has come a long way with trainings over the last 3 years.

Taxpayer Amy Brown said her husband has been a volunteer for 15 years. It is not about the pay, it is less than minimum wage, it is about saving lives and helping people.

Jonathan Mitchell said he is speaking as a taxpayer not as a BOD member. (Speaking of the annual meeting) people were insulting, mean and angry and there was no reason for it. As a taxpayer he thought it was disgusting and as a Board member he was embarrassed.

Chief Pomfret said all the leaves are effective immediately.

Chairman's Comments:

Chairman Novak read his "farewell speech" attached:

“Chairman’s Comments April 15, 2010

“No Good Deed Goes Unpunished”

I am proud and appreciative of all the work and support I received from the members of the BOD (Richard Holt, Jon Mitchell, Peter Beauchaine and Steven Autieri) and all the department members. You all should be proud of what we all accomplished this past year. My hats off to everyone.

I would like to recognize the efforts of the former BOD members Peter Beauchaine and Steven Autieri. They were instrumental in supporting the needs of the District/Department in an effort to move the District/Department forward. Unfortunately they were not elected at this past Annual Meeting. My apologies to Mr. Autieri for having to weather the discourteous, disrespectful, rude, insulting attacks that questioned his integrity. Mr. Autieri’s contributions and accomplishments the past few months are infinitely more than what many former BOD members have accomplished over a period of 10 years.

All the citizens of Western Coventry should be proud of the accomplishments achieved by the former BOD, elected officers and Department members in the April 2008-April 2010 timeframe.

When I think of the WCFD Department members I think of the word

RESPECT:

R - Reliable

E – Exemplary

S - Skilled

P – Professional

E - Exemplary

C – Conscientious

T - Trained

However, when I think of the behavior of many members of the audience at this past Annual Meeting, I think of the word RESPECT in a different light:

R - Resentful

E - Embarrassing

S - Selfish/shameful

P - Pointless

E - Embittered

C - Cruel

T - Tasteless

Shame on me for only having 1 goal as a BOD member, “Simply, to move the District/Department forward.”

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as the Chairperson

of the BOD. My role as Chairperson of the BOD has come to an end effective this date.

Respectfully submitted,

Kent Novak”

Mr. Mitchell thanked Chairman Novak for everything he has done, he said Chairman Novak moved the district forward and took control in a situation that was not easily controllable.

Election of BOD Chairperson:

Chairman Novak said this would be his last official act. Mr. Mann requested that Chairman Novak reconsider. Chairman Novak denied the request but thanked him. Mssrs. Humble and Holt agree with Mr. Mann and wish he would reconsider. Chairman Novak said it still won't change anything; he is hoping they can remedy the situation.

Mr. Holt said he finds the leave of absence to be premature; he is shocked and doesn't understand it. At each meeting Chairman Novak has thanked the members on behalf of the Board. Mr. Mann said “What happened tonight show's the Chief's lack of leadership”. Chairman Novak disagreed with this, he said Mr. Mann shouldn't be speaking about performance here. Mr. Humble believes as a group most of the issues can be ironed out. Mr. Mann made a motion that all taxpayers be heard before any votes are taken.

Mr. Jackson said you can't assume anything but then at the meeting you can assume you won't get the \$27,000.

Taxpayer Dave Tate asked if the safety of the district has been compromised. Chairman Novak answered yes, they need fast answers.

Mr. Mitchell said there were scare tactics used for the annual meeting; the ad in the paper was used to scare the district taxpayers into believing they were getting screwed. Mr. Holt said they have a significant walk that they have to respond to; the safety of the district is compromised. They need to deal with the budget. He would like to have an executive session budget meeting as soon as possible, Mr. Mann seconded. Chairman Novak said an executive session is used to discuss performance only; the budget can't be discussed in executive session. Mr. Holt said they need to focus on the budget ASAP. Chairman Novak said first they need to find a remedy of personnel. Treasurer Underwood said they needed to inform Bob Mann ASAP that he is the acting leader. Mr. Jackson said we can't rely on Central, what if they are tied up in town. He said the mutual aid departments will not be the savior for us, what if we get 2 calls.

Mr. Humble motioned to recess at 7:50pm to contact Captain Mann. Mr. Mitchell seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Meet re-convened at 8:12pm with the presence of Captain Mann; jumping down to item 16a.

NEW BUSINESS:

Open Cascade Grant Bid Proposals:

Bids are opened and read. Bid #1 Brigham Industries Inc., Paxton Ma

Bid #2 Shipman's Fire Equipment, Waterford CT

Mr. Mitchell motioned to turn over the bid packages to Captain Mann for his recommendation. Mr. Humble seconded. Mr. Mann doesn't think the low CFM compressor should be considered. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Humble motioned to appoint Captain Mann as interim Chief, seconded by Mr. Holt. Mr. Mitchell asked what it is subject to. Captain Mann asked what the duration of the leave was. Chairman Novak re-read the letter for his benefit. Captain Mann said the chain of command calls for him to be in charge but he doesn't feel comfortable taking the position unless the Chief and the Deputy officially resign and with a leave with no definitive terms. He will check if any provisions were made for coverage from Central Coventry.

Mr. Mann asked Chairman Novak if he has reconsidered. He answered he must decline, he feels like he has wasted a lot of his time. He feels as if the annual meeting was a complete waste of time and effort.

Captain Mann said the leaves of absence leave 5 people on the roster; they can't adequately cover the district with this roster. Motion to appoint Captain Mann as interim chief is withdrawn; by nature of his rank he is in charge.

Mr. Humble motioned to nominate Earl Mann as BOD Chairman, he accepts. Mr. Holt seconds, motion carries 5-0.

Moderator's Report:

None, position is vacant and can't be filled at this time.

Treasurer's Report:

Report copies handed out (Treasurer's Report, General Ledgers and Balance Sheet). Treasurer Underwood said he is working with out a line item budget. Payroll is high because of the flood. Mr. Mitchell helped out with the FEMA submittal; reimbursement has been submitted for man hours, equipment and some pumps.

Captain Mann said he found a letter from the Chief to Fire Alarm in regards to coverage. Mr. Humble asked if there was a time on it. Captain Mann answered no just a date.

Chairman Mann asked Mr. Holt to attend the meeting at CCRI regarding FEMA reimbursement.

Treasurer Underwood said the agreement with the Dawson Group is in effect, the total collect for March was \$13,899 and April looks good.

Mr. Holt asked when Central responds do they get the Rescue Recovery dollars. Treasurer Underwood answered yes. Mr. Holt motioned to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. Mr. Humble seconded and asked if the ledger could be closed. Mr. Holt said there is still \$16,000 left in authorized funds; he would like to spend some of it on landscaping. Mr. Novak motioned to purchase a maple hardwood bench for the locker room for \$182. Mr. Mitchell seconded, motion carried unanimously. Motion on acceptance of Treasurer's report carries unanimously.

Placement of RIDEM Diesel Vehicle Replacement Program Grant Funds:

Treasurer Underwood suggests putting the \$50,000 towards the new truck.

Tax Collector's Report:

Report copies handed out (email). Additional report handed out, Trial Balance Report. Tax Collector Smith said she will be sending out 600 delinquent notices. Mr. Mitchell asked if this was more than usual. She answered a little bit. Mr. Holt motioned to accept the Tax Collector's reports as presented, Mr. Novak seconded, motion carried unanimously.

2010-2011 Fiscal Year Budget:

Mr. Humble motioned to call a budget meeting, Mr. Mitchell seconded.

It will be held on Tuesday April 20, 2010 at 6pm. Mr. Mitchell motioned to table the remaining agenda items. Mr. Humble seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Captain Mann suggests waiting a couple of days and then advertising and posting a meeting to have the members come in to discuss things. Mr. Mitchell suggests this be an executive session if there will be discussion of personnel. It is suggested that legal counsel is consulted. Mr. Mitchell motions for the Chair to contact Attorney Harsch to discuss the proper procedure. Mr. Novak seconded. Mr. Holt said he would like to participate. Motion is amended to contact counsel and then hold an informal meeting with the Chief and a spokesperson for the members based on the attorney's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda items #13, 14, 15, 16b, 16c and 16d were not discussed.

Adjournment:

Mr. Novak motioned to adjourn, Mr. Mitchell seconded, motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:34pm.